NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6120 SEPTEMBER 1, 1978
DOUGLAS ROBERTS/ATHENS

CAMP DAVID-EGYPT

ANNCR:

WITH THE MEETING OF ITS NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WEDNESDAY NIGHT (8/30), EGYPT NOW APPEARS TO HAVE COMPLETED PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 6TH SUMMIT TALKS AT CAMP DAVID BETWEEN PRESIDENT SADAT, ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER BEGIN, AND PRESIDENT CARTER. WITH A LOOK AT EGYPT'S VIEW OF THE SUMMIT, HERE IS A BACKGROUND REPORT FROM DOUGLAS ROBERTS AT THE V.O.A. MIDDLE EAST BUREAU.

VOICE:

JUST A LITTLE MORE THAN NINE MONTHS AGO, MISTER SADAT BOARDED AN EGYPTIAN AIRLINER AND FLEW OFF TO ISRAEL, AN HISTORIC AND SPECTACULAR JOURNEY THAT LAUNCHED A WHOLE NEW PHASE IN THE MORE THAN THIRTY YEAR SEARCH FOR AN END TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. THE EGYPTIAN LEADER HAS MADE SEVERAL TRIPS SINCE THEN, BUT NONE, PERHAPS, AS IMPORTANT AS THE ONE HE BEGINS NEXT WEEK TO THE UNITED STATES. EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS HAVE SAID THE CAMP DAVID MEETING IS LIKELY TO BE JUST AS SIGNIFICANT AS MISTER SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

ONLY A MONTH AGO, THE EGYPTIAN LEADER WAS RULING OUT ANY FURTHER DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL UNTIL IT AGREES THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE OVER ARAB TERRITORY CAPTURED DURING THE NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN WAR. MISTER SADAT WAS FAIRLY ANGERED BY ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO MAKE THE CONCESSIONS THAT CAIRO THINKS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A PEACE ACCORD. BUT THEN, SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE ARRIVED ON THE SCENE WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S HAND-WRITTEN INVITATION TO THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT AND AN AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO PLAY THE ROLE OF A FULL PARTNER IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

IN CAIRO'S VIEW, THIS U.S. COMMITMENT IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT. LONG BEFORE HIS TRIP TO ISRAEL, MISTER SADAT WAS SAYING THAT THE U.S. HOLDS NINETY-NINE PER CENT OF THE CARDS IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE -- MEANING EGYPT BELIEVES THAT ONLY THE U.S. HAS THE NECESSARY INFLUENCE TO BRING ABOUT A SETTLEMENT.

A TWELVE-MAN COMMITTEE FROM THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS COMPILED MISTER SADAT'S BRIEF FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMIT TALKS. NEWS REPORTS INDICATE THAT IT IS AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF CAIRO'S POLICY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE MISTER SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL. THIS WOULD INCLUDE EGYPT'S FORMULATION OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES SOUGHT DURING THE ABORTIVE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI POLITICAL TALKS IN JERUSALEM LAST JANUARY, CAIRO'S PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP, AND A HOST OF OTHER DOCUMENTS, LETTERS, AND POSITION PAPERS RELATED TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

ALL OF THESE REPORTEDLY FOCUS ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, RECOGNITION OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, AND SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT. THESE WERE DISCUSSED WEDNESDAY NIGHT (8/30) AT MISTER SADAT'S RETREAT ON THE BANK OF THE SUEZ CANAL, DURING A THREE-HOUR MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, EGYPT'S HIGHEST POLICY-MAKING BODY. AFTER THAT MEETING, A SPOKESMAN SAID EGYPT'S AIM AT THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT WILL BE AGREEMENT ON AN OVERALL AND PERMANENT SETTLEMENT. AND THE SPOKESMAN RE-AFFIRMED CAIRO'S REJECTION OF ANY PARTIAL OR INTERIM SOLUTIONS OR ANY BILATERAL ACCORDS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL -- THIS, CLEARLY IN RESPONSE TO STATEMENTS FROM PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND OTHER ISRAELI OFFICIALS.

PREDICTABLY, EGYPTIAN COMMENTATORS HAVE PLACED HEAVY EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UPCOMING SUMMIT. EDITORS IN CAIRO HAVE DESCRIBED IT AS CRUCIAL, DECISIVE, AND A MAJOR TURNING POINT. AND THE COMMENTARY BROADCAST BY CAIRO RADIO WEDNESDAY WARNED OF SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES IF THE SUMMIT FAILS. MOST EGYPTIAN ANALYSTS SEEM TO FEEL THAT THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WILL HINGE ON THE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS AIDES. BUT FEW ANALYSTS IN CAIRO ARE YET READY TO PREDICT THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS.

GH/RCS